

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia

Briefing to the Security Council on Somalia

13 September 2017

Mr. President,

The long term as well as immediate challenges facing Somalia remain formidable, whether humanitarian, economic, security or political. The unity of the Council and the solidarity of the international community have been essential to the gradual, if fragile, progress that is being made.

At my last briefing in May, the humanitarian crisis was deteriorating, fast. Thanks to the swift and generous contribution of more than US\$1 billion for humanitarian action since the beginning of the year, agencies have been able to mount a famine prevention response reaching over 3 million people per month.

The worst of the famine threat has been averted. However, the damage to lives and livelihoods, particularly women, children and marginalised groups, has been extensive. 900,000 people have been newly displaced in the last nine months. And the risk of famine still remains.

An imperative for Somalis is to escape the vicious cycle of recurring weather-related shocks. Humanitarian and development partners are coming together to build institutional capacity, strengthen resilience and boost productivity, in line with the Secretary-General's New Way of Working.

The Federal Government, supported by the UN and the World Bank, is developing plans for a comprehensive Post-Disaster Needs Assessment of the impact of the drought, and a Recovery and Resilience Framework to reduce the risk of famine.

Mr. President,

The peaceful transition of power earlier this year following the electoral process created a sense of hope and a moment of political opportunity. The Federal Government remains determined to achieve core objectives, including improving security, notably in Mogadishu; creating jobs; and passing key legislation that will make a difference.

But its honeymoon period is now over. Somalia is not the first Government to experience this phenomenon.

Immediate political challenges are complicated by ill-defined relationships between the Federal Government and Federal Member States, between the Executive and the Legislature, between the newly formed Upper House and the House of the People.

Other challenges relate to politicians and power brokers using opportunities to advance their own clan interests or personal ambitions, using tools such as threats of impeachment and motions of no confidence.

The key issue is whether the Federal Government will be successful in managing these constituencies and in preventing them from threatening progress on core objectives and the stability of the state.

The strong working relationship between the President and the Prime Minister and the determination of the Federal Government to deliver tangible economic and security benefits for the population is very encouraging.

Immediate issues that are currently creating strains in the relations between state institutions include the controversy over the transfer to Ethiopia of a well-known Ogaden National Liberation Front figure, and the reverberations of the Government's determination to maintain a neutral posture in the dispute between important Gulf partners.

They also include simmering disputes around the country, including in Hirshabelle and the impeachment of the State President; the political stand-off in Galmudug where the State President has been unable to advance power sharing and reconciliation talks with Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a; and tensions in the Lower Shabelle.

Unresolved, these could undermine the gains made so far in the state formation process. The UN is working closely with IGAD and other partners to play a constructive role, including to support the Hirshabelle election.

Resolution is needed of key issues that will define the federal state, including the division of powers, agreements on revenue and resource sharing between federal and state governments. They also include the structure of the judiciary, the status of Benadir region in which the national capital is located, and the formalisation of the status of all Federal Member States.

Advancing the review of the Provisional Federal Constitution is therefore a priority. Useful consultations are taking place to ensure an inclusive review process, though respective roles and responsibilities of core institutions still need to be clarified. The next step is a national consultative conference scheduled in October which should agree on a two-year master plan.

Significant progress has been made on preparing and passing priority laws, such as the Telecommunications Bill and the Human Rights Commission Act.

Completing the constitutional review is also critical for the successful holding of elections in 2020/21. The legislative framework and agreement on the electoral model are urgently needed. These will help dispel scepticism about whether Somalia can move away from the so-called 4.5 model to universal suffrage.

The crisis in relations between Gulf countries has had an impact on Somalia. Anticipated investments and revenue streams have not been forthcoming, and the Federal Government's

declaration of neutrality, while receiving widespread support, has not gone down well with certain constituencies. Your continued support is needed to protect Somalia from the potentially destabilising effects of geopolitical rivalries.

Current political turbulence in Somalia must be taken seriously but should not obscure the steady, if uneven, progress the country is making.

Mr. President,

Somalia has great economic potential – whether in agribusiness, livestock, fisheries, trade, renewable and other energy sources – as well as highly entrepreneurial men and women both in the country and in the diaspora. Unleashing this potential depends upon success in reaching a political settlement between the Government and the private sector, and upon government policies and capacities to implement them.

A critical requirement will be raising revenues, whether from domestic sources or by accessing concessional finance. Advancing arrears clearance and reaching Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) decision point are essential and will require both the strengthening of public financial management and international action. The support of the Council could make a decisive difference.

In the meantime, Somalia remains heavily dependent upon aid. Both traditional and non-traditional donors, including many serving on the Council, have provided generous assistance.

The Prime Minister is appealing for immediate budget support to allow the Government to deliver on jobs and security, and to strengthen relations with Federal Member States by means of fiscal transfers. The UN and the World Bank have collaborated closely to devise a ‘surge support’ package for public works. I urge partners to follow the EU, Norway and Sweden’s lead to use Recurrent Cost and Reform Financing Facility to that end.

Mr. President,

Security has improved in Mogadishu as a result of the Federal Government’s Mogadishu Stabilisation Plan. This deserves more support. However, Al-Shabaab is still a potent threat and the overall security situation in the country remains volatile.

Addressing insecurity and the continuing threat from Al-Shabaab requires vigorous implementation of the National Security Architecture Agreement and of the Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS). International partners have now been identified, and have started work on each of the four CAS strands, namely enabling effective AMISOM operations and implementing the transition from AMISOM; strengthening Somalia’s security sector, including policing and maritime; stabilisation; and fourthly preventing and countering violent extremism.

Securing predictable funding for AMISOM is a top priority. Your own deliberations in Addis Ababa last week have illuminated the key issues. The Secretary-General’s report on

funding for AMISOM, due in November, provides an opportunity to explore and propose funding options, taking into account the limitations of voluntary contributions.

This should be anchored in a common narrative on Somalia's security needs in the next five years, one shared by the Federal Government, the AU, the UN and the main investors in Somalia's security, including the US, EU and major bilateral partners.

This needs to build upon the recommendations of the Joint AU-UN Review of AMISOM, and the results of the Operational Readiness Assessment of the Somali Army now underway, and upon progress in implementing the National Security Architecture Agreement.

Successful transition of responsibility for security from AMISOM to Somali security institutions requires adequate and coherent support for both AMISOM and Somalia's security forces, as well as clarity about the role of UNSOS as transition gets underway. Sustainable transition requires key political and operational conditions being met.

AMISOM continues to play an indispensable role in protecting Somalia's progress and people. Somali security forces are not yet ready to shoulder full responsibilities. Funding for AMISOM and Somali security forces must complement each other.

Mr. President,

Conflict resolution, local reconciliation and a reduction in violence are essential to progress and to reducing costs, human, and financial. The UN is working with IGAD, the African Union, the EU and other partners to strengthen national conflict resolution capacities as well as to facilitate agreements in specific locations. An example of this has been in Galkacyo where real progress is being made.

In conclusion, Somalia faces immediate crises as well as basic structural problems, some of which are worrisome in terms of their ability to derail political progress. Providing practical support and political encouragement to the Somali leadership, both at the federal and state level, will continue to be essential.

Allow me to end by thanking Council members for your united and steady commitment to Somalia and your continued support to the United Nations and to me and my team.

Thank you.